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NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF 1984 DROUGHT IN KENYA 1/1

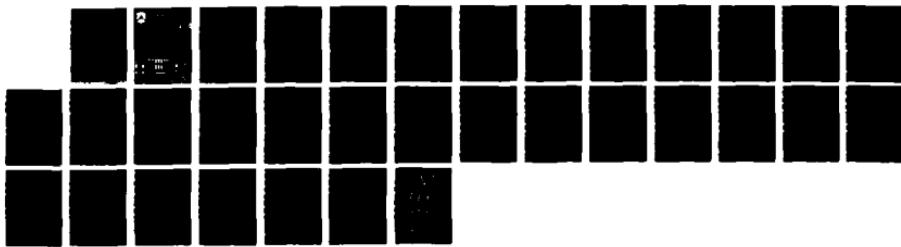
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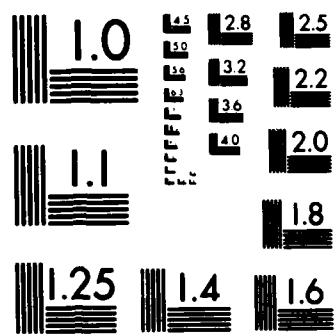
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## RESEARCH REPORT

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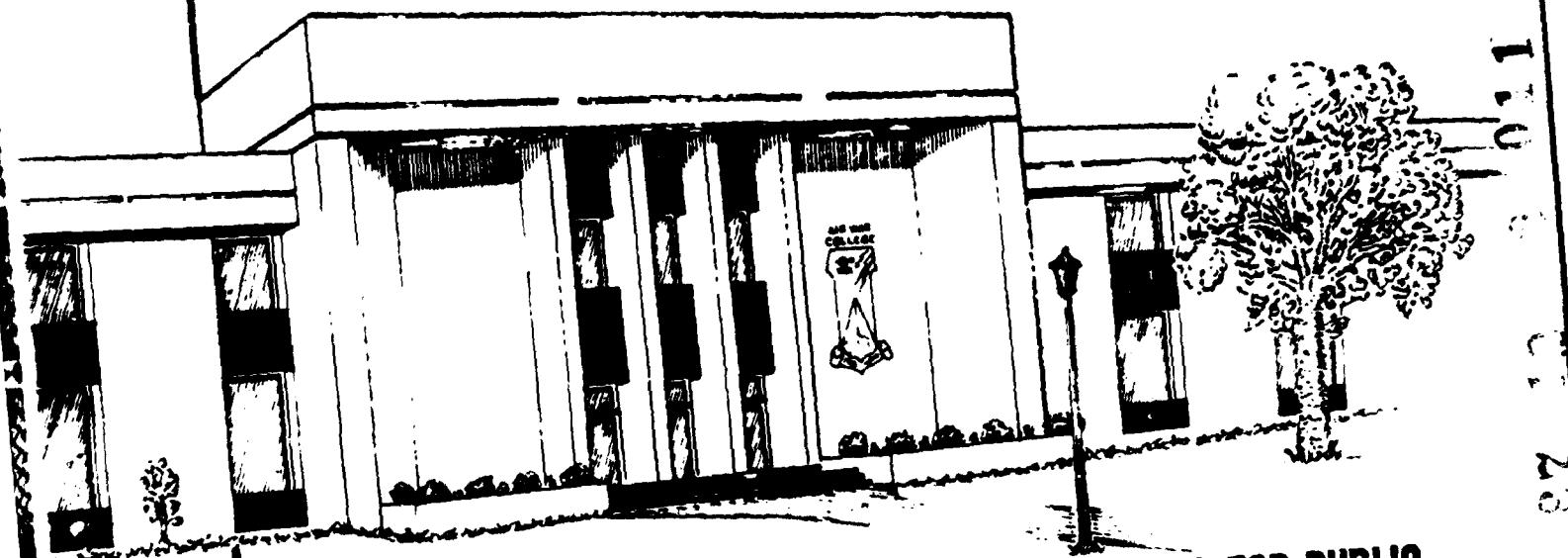
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DROUGHT IN KENYA

By COLONEL PETER G. ATAMBO, KENYAN AIR FORCE



AIR UNIVERSITY  
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**AIR WAR COLLEGE  
AIR UNIVERSITY**

**NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS  
OF 1984 DROUGHT IN KENYA**

**by**

**Peter G. Atambo  
Colonel, 82 AIR FORCE, KENYA**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
FULFILMENT OF THE RESEARCH  
REQUIREMENT**

**Research Advisor: Dr. David Albright**

**MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA**

**March 1987**



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**AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT**

**TITLE:** National Security Implications of the 1984 drought in Kenya.

**AUTHOR:** Peter G. Atambo, Colonel, Kenya.

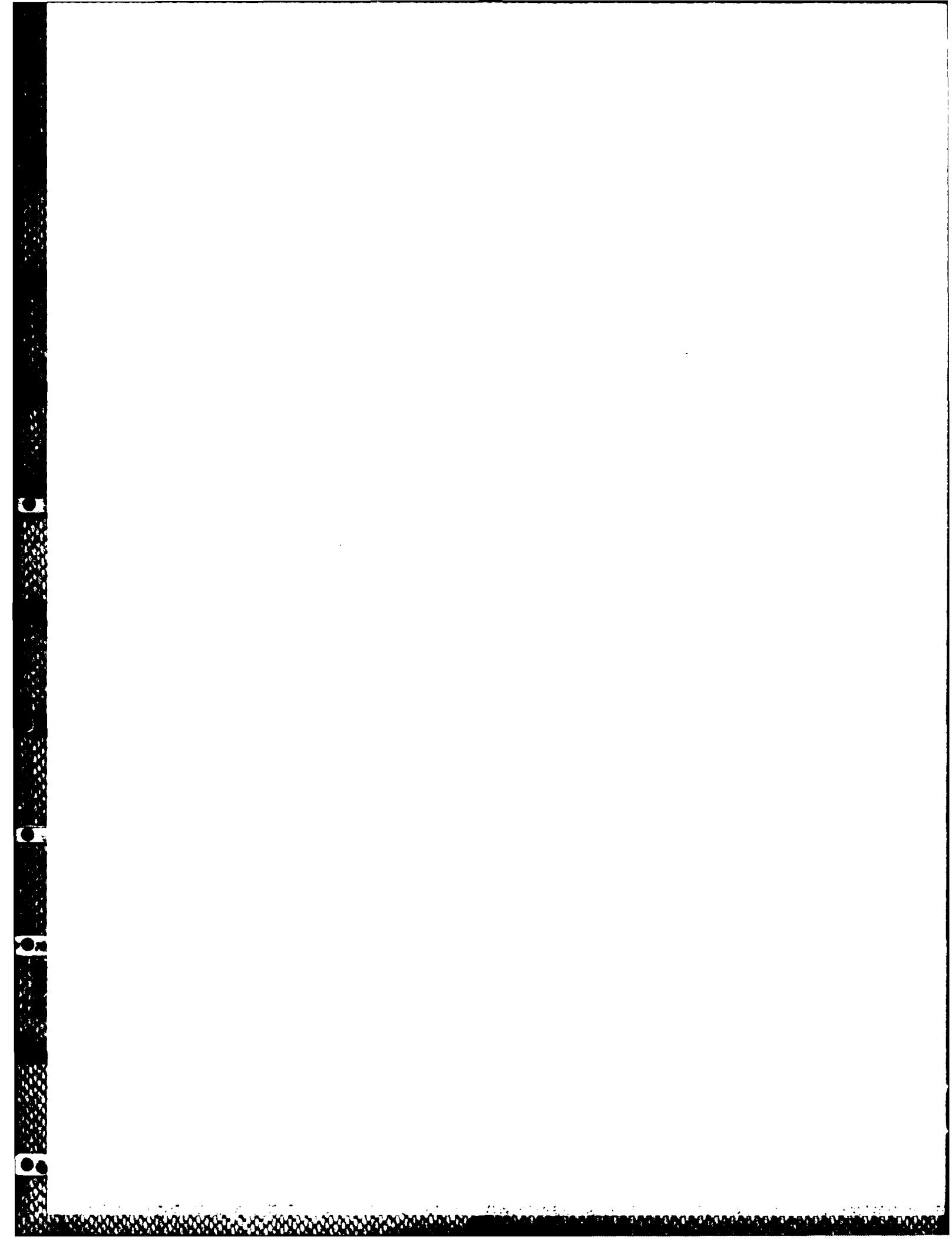
This paper analyses the causes of the 1984 drought in Kenya and how the Kenya government reacted to the situation. Kenya had previously enjoyed good climatic conditions, and the rain had enabled her to produce good harvests. The country's economy, it should be noted, depends largely on agriculture.

The manner in which the Kenya government handled the famine which was caused by the 1984 drought, should serve as an example for other drought stricken countries to follow. But the political atmosphere in the respective countries will determine the degree of success there.

The international community responded very generously. This was a commendable deed, and the African countries should maintain the friendly relations that exist now with these people. For drought is a recurring phenomenon, and it cannot be fought single handedly.

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Colonel Peter G. Atambo is an Air Force officer in Kenya. His previous assignments include pilot duties in air transport operations, commanding a flying wing and most recently base commander of Moi Air Base in Nairobi. During his air transport duties, he flew into Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Chad, Nigeria, Cameroon, Zaire, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe among other countries. This gave him first-hand insight into the situation of the African continent. He is a 1983 graduate of the Royal Air Force Staff College, Bracknell, UK and the Air War College, class of 1987.



NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS  
OF 1984 DROUGHT IN KENYA

INTRODUCTION

Normally, when people consider a country's national security, the first thing that comes to their mind is some action of military import, either an internal upheaval or an attack from outside. Yet there are many other factors that can affect the national security of a country: earthquakes, terrorism, political squabbles or hunger. Hunger is an outcome of famine, which is most often caused by drought. Famine can even cause starvation, and acute mass starvation can affect social order just as much as war can.

Of the 36 countries which have been classified by the UN as the poorest in the world, 26 are in Africa, and all of these have suffered very bad droughts that resulted in mass starvation. Thus, their inhabitants fall among the 700 million people in this world who do not get enough energy from their diet.(1)

This problem is growing in Africa. The Sahara desert is expanding at a very fast rate, and this expansion has ominous implications for our food production. Drought is not an isolated phenomenon: it is spreading at a very rapidly. This development has contributed to a decline in food production in Africa by about 12 percent yearly since the

mid 1970s. (2) Some countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zaire and Kenya, to be sure, have enjoyed good agricultural climate, but there have been occasions, even there, when rainfall has failed, causing drought and some difficulties regarding food supplies. A good example is the 1984 drought in Kenya, which caused total crop failure.

Traditionally, it had been taken for granted in Kenya that the planting period was between March and June and the harvest would be guaranteed about October through December. But this was not the case in 1984. That year Kenya's farmers planted crops, but for the first time in more than 100 years, their expectations did not materialise. Kenyans had heard about crop failures or droughts in other countries --mostly in Africa-- but not in Kenya herself.

However, Kenya lies to the south of Ethiopia and west of Somalia. These two countries are well known to have drought all year round. The Sahel belt also passes through these countries. As Brad Morse, Director, of the UN Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, has said, "Drought will undoubtedly recur in Africa, famines must be prevented. They are not inevitable".(3) It is, therefore, not surprising to find that the drought is spreading further south.

This paper will discuss the implications of the 1984 drought for Kenya's national security with a focus on the economical and social effects, and the government's handling of the situation. It is interesting to note that Kenya managed to cope with this situation with a high degree of

success. This fortunate result was due largely to the fact that the government administrative machinery is well established; therefore, there was not much difficulty in mobilizing to deal with the problem.

#### THE CAUSES

The causes of the difficulties in 1984 fall into two basic categories: those of 1983 and those of 1984. Let us first look at what happened in 1983.

Although Kenya's farmers harvested some crops in 1983, 3.5 million tons, the amount fell far short of the expected quantity. A normal harvest is about 7.0 million metric tons.(4) This poor harvest was due to the small amount of rain that fell during the planting period. The situation was, however, taken lightly, and no contingency plans were made.

In addition, the instability in neighbouring Uganda forced many Ugandans to flee to Kenya and seek refuge. At times, the Kenya government even sent food donations to Uganda under the umbrella of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Another factor to note here is that the population of Kenya is about 20m. The amount of food required to feed all of these stomachs is a lot. If you have also to feed the refugees, then you can imagine how much you need to have in stock.

All of this, coupled with the smuggling of many types of commodities to the neighbouring countries, left

Kenya with no food surplus in 1983. But developments in 1984 really produced a crisis. By this time, most food stocks were running out for it had been expected that the situation would improve in 1985. Nevertheless, food sharing with our neighbours, either directly through official channels or through smuggling, was still going on. Then, the rains failed completely in 1984. Even the most productive parts of Kenya, like Kisii, Kitale and Nakuru experienced the worst crop failure in more than 100 years.

#### THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS.

The crop failure had a big impact on Kenya's economic situation. This country does not have any minerals to bring in external income to boost her foreign reserves. Kenya relies on the agricultural sector and tourism for her foreign exchange earnings. Therefore, any failure of rain or reduction of visitors can cause economic difficulty, and, if the country cannot recover, then there can be a total economic collapse.

What happened in Kenya is that some food and many other commodities had to be bought from outside, thus draining off the little foreign exchange that was so precious. This caused food prices to go up to cover all of the shipping and handling expences. In this connection, it is worth noting that world food prices had been rising year after year. To add to the difficulties, the Kenya shilling had been devalued several times following the 1980-82 world

recession. The IMF makes sure that all of the countries that have some dealing with it keep at par as far as monetary values are concerned.(5) For example in 1974 US\$1 = KShs 7.85; in 1982 US\$1 = KShs 12.90; and in 1984 US\$1 = KShs 14.5. Now the exchange rate stands at US\$1 = KShs 16.4.

The crop failure also meant that there was no export of any meaningful kind to earn the country badly needed foreign exchange. In 1984, Kenya was in the process of paying back some money she had borrowed for her development plans since independence; therefore, she was in a very high level of indebtedness. The outstanding debt in 1984 was US\$3,062 million. This was 53.3 percent of her Gross National Product.(6) The balance of payments in the same year was US\$ 135 million, while the gross international reserves were US\$ 414 million.

#### SOCIAL AND SECURITY EFFECTS.

As pointed out earlier, drought leads to hunger, and hunger, sometimes to famine. How will hungry citizens behave if they do not see any remedial actions by the government? Normally, they display irritability, excitability, nervousness and restlessness. These may well result in a coup. Such was the case in Ethiopia, where the 2,000-year-old monarchy was overthrown, and in Liberia, during the 1978 riots in Monrovia over the price of rice.(7) An African aid worker defined the politics of food in this way: "Starve the city dwellers and they will riot; starve

the peasants and they die. If you were a politician which would you choose?" (8)

It is not hard, then to grasp what was going on in Kenya during these two years. To begin with, the farmers were getting frustrated because the only source of their income had dried up on them. Besides the failure of the rains, agricultural inputs were getting more and more expensive, and many small farmers ended up exhausting all of the meagre savings that they had put away. The ordinary citizen had a hard time trying to pay the rising food prices of the few commodities that could be found. Kenyans had heard of some countries experiencing food shortages, but who expected Kenya to face the same phenomena?

Theft had already increased because the situation had turned out to be survival of the fittest. If you did not have the money to buy the little there was, then you tried other means. And the obvious alternative was sharing by force or without the knowledge of the owner.

Many people were turned away from farms because there was not much work for them since the farmers had reduced their commitments. Labour reduction also became the order of the day in most factories, butcheries, bakeries and markets. There was, therefore, great fear of what the future might be.

A country with a large unemployed population opens herself to big problems. This, together with the factors I mentioned before, caused a lot of grumbling. So serious was

the situation that social disorder could have ensued had the government not come in and taken strong and positive remedial actions.

The threat was death. We have heard and seen what happens in countries that have been having famine every year. People move from their villages and head for the capital or to any part of the country where food, water or shelter can be found. If the government does not have its priorities right, then the situation can very easily get out of control. The 1984 drought affected a lot of countries including Kenya's neighbours, but what kept Kenya from ending up in an unrecoverable position is that she was frank about it and went all out to get help. Moreover, the government machinery was efficient enough to handle the situation.

Unlike in many other countries, the priority in Kenya is not political power, it is productivity. We have heard new leaders brought to power by coups elsewhere saying that previous leaders had put their country in turmoil. They have claimed that the country was facing poverty, starvation and instability. The drought in Kenya would have put this state in the same category had its leaders not taken any remedial actions.

#### THE GOVERNMENT'S REACTION.

In treating the government's response to the situation, it is useful to divide the discussion into the

immediate reaction and future plans.

Immediate Response.

To begin with, the government of President Daniel Toroitich arap Moi became increasingly worried because the drought was something that was affecting citizens' lives. It therefore, set up a committee to look into the problems that were related to the drought affair. The government considered that this situation should be addressed by senior officers in the President's Office, although it never announced the problem to be of a crisis nature. (Mind you, the people were suffering, but there had been no deaths as a result of the situation at hand). This committee was composed of Permanent Secretaries from the Department of Defence, the Ministries of Finance and Physical Planning, Transport and Communications, Agriculture, and Health, plus the Provincial Administration. It could also call upon anybody or organization that it deemed necessary.

The committee came up with the following recommendations for actions and policies:

- a. Immediate import of food stuffs.
- b. Cessation of food exportation from Kenya.
- c. Distribution of food, whether for sale or for donation, to be supervised by the Provincial Administration.
- d. The National Cereals and Produce Board, which normally buys grains from farmers and then distributes them around the country,

still to be the sole importer of foreign commodities.

- e. Handling of the current situation with utmost urgency but no declaration of it as a crisis.
- f. The operation to be conducted using existing means and not new resources.
- g. Foreign donors to be approached for aid as a matter of urgency. (9)

Although the government's reaction to the drought situation was immediate and positive, a few problems were anticipated. First, it would be a long time before the foreign aid or the imported foods arrived. Then, the unloading and bagging plus the distance that had to be covered during the actual operation would require an additional period. There was also a lack of proper information as to the capacity of the railways, the accessibility of some of the roads, the trucks available, and the viability of aerial delivery. However, it was decided that Air Force planes could be used if the requirement arose. (This is where I came in. I was to co-ordinate this operation.) Also, the committee did not have immediate means to update itself on the rural grain reserves. Nor could it decide on who was to receive relief food while others were to pay as usual.

But these problems did not deter or delay the delivery of the badly awaited commodities. It is interesting to note that Kenya has a very well established

administrative structure, and this greatly facilitated the whole process. Furthermore, the government did not hesitate to use the already existing spirit of togetherness assistance. The slogan for this is "HARAMBEE", which means "let us pull together". President Moi called on the areas that were not experiencing serious food shortages, to donate to their suffering brothers and sisters. The response was so good that the lead time that was required to acquire the overseas aid was not felt.

Meanwhile, people were advised that even though the maize to be imported was yellow, it was just as good as the white maize to which Kenyans are so used. This was not the first instance that the country had received yellow maize, but precaution was taken because the amount now would be much more than had ever been seen before. I remember sometime in the 1960s missionaries had brought in yellow maize as a donation and not many people ate it. This time, there was no choice.

The countries that responded to Kenya's request for assistance were USA, Britain, Canada, West Germany, Saudi Arabia, Japan and Denmark. A total of 1.4 million tons of grain was imported, of which 45 percent came from the donors. Fortunately, Kenya was able to pay for the rest of the imported grain.

#### Future Plans.

Having controlled the drought situation, the Kenya Government set out to formulate a long-range policy that

would keep from having to face such a situation again. This had several dimensions. A Famine Relief Fund was started on Harambee basis, and a committee was established to manage it. Farmers were advised to use irrigation instead of relying wholly on the rain. People were asked to conserve forests, which attract rain, and the call was initiated to "plant two trees for every one you cut."

As for the population growth rate, the government reemphasised the need to have only the number of children that one could support. It, therefore, introduced a new tax bill which gave exemptions for up to four children and one wife only.

Soil conservation and expansion of agriculture were stressed anew. Serious thought is being given to the development of the Lake Victoria region, and an authority has been set up to handle this issue. Plans are also being considered to pump water from the lake (which is 3,500 feet above sea level) to Timboroa (which is 9,300 feet above sea level) so that the surrounding semi-arid areas can be irrigated.

By the same token, the Cereals and Produce Board was tasked to expand its storage facilities and spread them around the country. It was told as well to look into the possibility of introducing silos for storage. At the moment, big hangars are used, and they do not guarantee preservation.(10)

#### MY EVALUATION.

The preceding pages have examined the factors that led to the 1984 drought in Kenya and the government's response to it. Although the government was not, and will not be, able to control the weather, it at least handled the situation very well. This was an incident that had not been anticipated in Kenya and came as a real surprise. The fact that the Kenya Government did not term the drought a crisis reflected the confidence that the government had in its ability to fight the drought. In fact, J. M. Cohen and D. B. Lewis in their report on "The Role of the Government in Combating Food Shortages" emphasized that lessons should be learned from Kenya's response.(11)

What can governments that have experienced famine caused by drought but have never managed to contain the situation learn from the Kenya example? First, a stable government is very important to be able to do anything. Then a government must have its priorities straight. As Encounter, July/August 1986, points out, many governments display misplaced priorities. Instead of feeding human beings, they buy arms to keep them in power. You wonder what the rationale is.

Ethiopia and Chad afford good illustrations of the consequences of the absence of these two things. In Chad, stability has not existed for more than ten years. In Ethiopia, the Eritrean and Ogaden wars have so dominated daily life that food management has become a secondary

issue. It has been said that Ethiopia can feed herself if only she can sort herself out. In Chad, desertification has reached such a stage that the situation probably cannot be rectified. It can only be controlled now and then.

As for Kenya herself, some aspects of the 1984 experience are worth bearing in mind in a positive sense. The government, as noted, decided to handle the matter using the existing system instead of creating a completely new work force. This was a superb idea because sometimes outside ideas are not very compatible with a country's culture. True, some governments do not have existing systems sufficiently flexible to adapt to any situation, but the administration in Kenya proved efficient enough to handle the extra responsibility of distributing the famine relief.

The Kenyan people also are to be commended because they behaved in a very mature manner, thus giving the government an adequate opportunity to fight the drought. At least part of the explanation for their behavior lies in the spirit of cooperation that the government has fostered. Kenya has one political party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), and its motto is "Harambee". "Harambee" conditioned the citizens to respond automatically to government requests because people had become used to helping each other.

Some writers, to be sure, say "harambee" means "pulling together while others pause." I do not agree with this translation, for the late President, Mzee Jomo

Kenyatta, told the people that we had to work hard together in order to have progress and prosperity in Kenya. Many outsiders had thought that Kenya would be in turmoil after independence in 1963, but to their astonishment, Kenyatta led the country to great heights. Furthermore, after his death, his successor, President Moi introduced the "nyayo" philosophy, which simply means "footsteps". That is, Moi was to follow Mzee Kenyatta's ideologies. These philosophies assure full mass participation in society and access to things like hospitals, schools, agricultural fields, etc; (as advocated in the KANU manifesto). Thus, these factors molded the Kenyans into a mature nation, and that is why things worked out rather well.

Something to note here, however, is that Kenya had all the time since her independence to develop her infrastructures. Otherwise, it would have taken a very strong leader to employ the Kenya style of reaction during droughts. When the drought actually occurred in Kenya in 1984, the roads were suitable for food transportation, and the Produce and Cereals Board had adequate storage facilities to accommodate the relief food, approximately 2.5 million metric tons of grain.

Had the government opted to create a new system to handle the drought, frustrations would have been felt when the country returned to regular operations. This is to say nothing of the high operation costs that would have been incurred had other means been chosen. What was needed from

outside were donations of various sorts, with the mode of operation remaining Kenyan.

The Kenya government asked for donors to send food, and several foreign governments responded to this request. But some wanted to come and implement the distribution. The Kenya government, to its credit, insisted on handling the situation alone. How can one start building storage facilities anew just because most donors insist that donated food be put in a facility built by the donor country? Does this mean that Africans cannot think as well as anyone else?

Many affected countries that can comfortably handle matters on their own suffer even more when they accede to such demands. However, things do not always work as well in other countries as they did in Kenya. Therefore, whether to or not to accept direct involvement by donors requires very serious thinking and judgement.

One might ask why these donor countries should respond to requests for aid? The answer is simple. First, people give help for humanitarian reasons. Second, the world is full of many masters. Each one would like to look better than the other, and all desire allies and favourable links throughout the world. For example, the USA has found Kenya a great friend, and when the request was sent to Washington, the USA responded very positively. It would not like to lose another ally in the vicinity of the Indian Ocean and thus endanger its global position.

These considerations were stressed by the Commission

on World Hunger set up by the U.S. President. The Commission looked at the world food crisis and the challenge the US faces in eliminating hunger.(12) Its final recommendation was that US development assistance programs for the 1980s should emphasize "self-reliance" rather than "dependency or self-sufficiency". Self-reliance requires that a country should have enough funds available to buy what it does not or cannot produce, while self-sufficiency means that it produces enough food but not much else. It does not possess purchasing-power. Under the concept of self-reliance, what the Kenya government should do is to maintain the good relations that exist with the USA but try to produce and store extra food. That way, when such a catastrophe hits the country again, the surprise will not be repeated.

After dealing with the immediate problem, the government took some steps of a longer-range nature that merit continuation. Specifically, it intensified its campaign on family planning, reforestation and food management. The population growth rate in Kenya has been 4 percent, and President Moi has put his Vice President in charge of a family planning program aimed at reducing it as much as possible. However, it is important to remember that Kenya, and Africa as a whole, need additional manpower to keep operating expenses in agriculture low. Kenya has no mines or industries to generate the foreign exchange it needs. It does, however, have an area of 569,249 sq. km.

Only a third of this total is arable, but another third is semi-arable. Thus, with irrigation facilities, a lot of food can be produced. In this light, stressing population policy too much, as the World Bank is inclined to do, is detrimental to the development of adequate manpower resources. A study conducted by the World Bank showed that the labour force is decreasing in both agriculture and industry, while it is increasing in the services. The decrease is at about 4.5 percent, whereas the increase is at 8 percent.(13)

What should be stressed is ways and means of improving the harnessing of available water. On reforestation, the motto of planting two trees for every one tree cut down is very worthwhile. This is the only way that the spread of the Sahara can be slowed down. In addition, the government ought to continue educating farmers on farm management and more so on irrigation methods, which are preferable to just waiting for the rains. In the past, water tables in Kenya have never fallen to alarming levels; therefore, farmers near rivers or around the lakes should be able to produce crops all year round.

As for food policy, the government has done a good job here. What happened in 1984 was unfortunate and unavoidable, but the next time that the drought comes, it will be disappointed.

There is, however, a question that needs to be addressed in this context. Should Kenya stop helping

refugees or cease donating food to needy countries like Ethiopia and Uganda? Of course not. What it should do is to establish a policy on how to do such things and what food level should be kept in stock. A national strategic grain reserve of about five million bags of each commodity would be desirable, for the social disorder that a shortage of food would cause can be so devastating that no stable government would like to be faced with such a situation.

To wind up this evaluation, I believe that Africa can feed itself if only all of the continent's leaders would unite and work towards a common goal. A move in this direction was suggested during the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) 1985 meeting of the heads of state and government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. One of the members said, "We don't want our people to get used to hand-outs of food because it will only generate non-productive dependence". (14) The meeting vowed to take special action to improve the food situation and rehabilitate agricultural production in Africa in order to lay the foundation for food self-sufficiency.

Achieving this goal, however, will only be possible if the Africans change their minds about what to eat. During his recent TV series, Mr. Ali Mazrui said that Africa is a continent which produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce. While people used to eat cassava, yams, sweet potatoes, maize and beans, now they want to eat western types of food.

Not only have people changed their diets completely, but they have also tried to grow these different crops. Some governments have even put a lot of emphasis on cash crops and ignored vital commodities. Therefore, the small-scale farmers should be given as much of a chance to grow their vital crops as large-scale farmers who produce cash crops. This should include education about the soil, about seeds to be planted, about the fertilizer to be used and about the farm implements that are required. Moreover, consumer prices should be set to match the people's purchasing power, so as to control inflation, especially in urban areas.

Now let us look at Africa's external debt. Something must definitely be done to alleviate the burden it poses. The 1985 OAU meeting resolved to take measures in this direction. The continent's external debt was US\$158 billion at the end of 1984 and was expected to exceed US\$170 billion by the end of that year. This represented 36 percent of the continent's gross domestic product, and the debt-service ratio was expected to be much higher than 27 percent of exports in 1985. (15) Moreover, the trend was going to worsen unless some remedial action was taken. At one time, the former president of Tanzania and also a former Chairman of OAU, Mr. Julius Nyerere, asked; "Should we really let our people starve so that we can pay our debts?".(16)

A good line to take is for the international community and Africa to work on joint plans to see that the debt situation does not impede Africa's economic recovery

and development. As Mr. Berhane Deressa, Deputy Director of Ethiopia's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission told a group of Canadian observers in December 1985, "The response is a human bond that ties us together regardless of the distance that separates us. We are all human beings".(17)

#### CONCLUSION.

Kenya experienced drought in 1984, something that had not occurred in more than 100 years. What caused the drought could not be avoided, but when it set in, the Kenya government reacted in a very positive manner. Using the existing system of management and structures, the government kept the cost of operation to a minimum. Other countries, in contrast, have tried to import foreign social theories to solve their problems, but to their dismay the problems have just doubled. All that is required, really, is for a country to have concrete policies and well defined priorities.

Kenya's example should be followed because it proves that anyone can formulate ideas and make them work. External help can and should be sought, but not at the expense of discarding indigenous ways and means. Kenya has the "harambee" and "nyayo" philosophies. If Mzee Kenyatta had not instituted the "harambee" spirit of pulling together, things would probably have been very different. Then came the "nyayo" philosophy of President Moi. He told the people that he was going to follow the guidelines of Kenyatta. This cemented his position in the government, and when the

drought came he had no difficulties in mobilizing the masses. I can therefore comfortably say that Kenya had established her own social ideology, and it was easier and better to explore it than import outside social ideologies.

What remains now is for Kenya to improve her position with possible donors like the USA, so that she can get a positive response whenever she asks for help. In addition, she needs to stop illegal exportation of food and to help in reforestation efforts.

Obviously, when priorities are misplaced, then big problems can be experienced. Unlike some other African countries, Kenya has set the right priorities for herself. At no time has Kenya spent money on military equipment that she should have spent on education, agriculture or health. The government has also encouraged people to depend on the land, and it seeks to enhance the farmers' knowledge of crops and other types of farm produce.

On the aspect of controlling the population growth, the government should encourage family planning but, at the same time, consider the value of manpower versus mechanical resources. Kenya's economy depends on the agriculture industry. Although only 1/3 of the country is arable, the other parts can also be made productive by irrigation. The government should therefore expand the irrigation system throughout the country and employ the immense manpower we have. Although most school leavers prefer working in offices instead of tilling the land, the

government can improve the farming industry in order to attract these capable young people.

Africa, as a whole, does not have manpower problems. What it lacks is the proper development and use of human resources. For example, women are excluded from some technological fields, while in other cases, preference is given to expatriates instead of recognizing talented citizens. This trend of employment should be modified so that everybody can participate equally. Also the qualified Africans working abroad should be recalled and offered attractive terms according to their experience.

Looking further into the community of the African continent, there is already the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The OAU should use it as the agency to coordinate all other regional economic groups. In this way, policies will be streamlined, and cooperation between the various countries can be monitored. Such an agency might have helped the shortlived East African Community (EAC), linking Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, to survive. Friction developed between Tanzania and Uganda in the mid 1970s, and there was no major organization to counsel the two countries. The EAC ended up collapsing because no summit meetings were held for several years and each partner country started operating on its own.

There is also the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between the eastern and central-southern African countries. The PTA is supposed to function like the European Economic

Commission; good support from the OAU will help make this organization viable.

Other non-military bodies that the OAU can use in unifying Africa, providing a better basis for Africa's social security and improving the continent's food and trade policies include the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Union of Central Africa.(19) It might also not be a bad idea if the Front Line States brought the Republic of South Africa into the OAU.

The notion that the OAU should play a big part in coordinating economic recovery and development in Africa so that the less fortunate countries can be helped out is not a new one. In 1985 the Heads of State and Governments of the OAU, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; set out some specific goals that they would like to accomplish along thase lines. Among these are improvement of the economic/food situation and enhancement of agricultural development.(18) If these objectives are achieved, then Africa itself may emerge as the strategic centre and political heart of African recovery and development.

The international community can help in the attainment of the goals to a certain extent -- but only if it does not ignore indigenous factors and cultures. To tell us to opt for a different type of diet, for example, is not at all helpful. What should be considered is how to improve the production of our staple foods. For example, in 1985, the United States set up the African Economic Policy Reform

Program (AEPPR). (20) This program gives more and flexible assistance to those African countries that are considering or carrying out critical policy reforms. A sum of US\$75 million was used for the AEPPR during the first year. Another such program is the Special African Facility (SAF), created by the World Bank. These two programs and many others can assist the OAU in improving the food situation and food policy in Africa.

To be able to eat what one produces would go a long way in fighting drought, thus preventing famine. But if crises still come, as they may, well-thought-out and decisive policies for dealing with them will go a long way toward easing the problems that they cause.

NOTES

1. World Bank, Poverty and Hunger: Issues and options for Food Security in Developing Countries (Washington, DC, February 1986), p. 1.
2. World Bank Development Report 1986: Trade and Pricing Policies in World Agriculture (published by Oxford University Press 1986), p. 182.
3. David MacDonald, No More Famine: A Decade for Africa. (Canada, Janus Hall Associates, 1986), p. 21.
4. Interview with Mr. S. Mageto, Kenya's ambassador to the United States of America.
5. World Development Report 1986. p. 212.
6. Ibid.
7. J. P. Carter, Famine in Africa. (New York, Pergamon Press Ltd., 1982), p. 21.
8. MacDonald, p. 22.
9. Interview with Mr. Simeon Nyachae, Chief Secretary Office of the President of the Republic of Kenya.
10. Interview with Mageto.
11. Paul Henze, "Behind Ethiopia's Famine (II)", Encounter, July/August 1986, p. 27
12. Carter, p. 35.
13. World Development Report 1986 p. 238.
14. MacDonald, pp. 10 and 11.
15. Ibid., p. 49.
16. Ibid., p. 16.
17. Ibid., p. 12.
18. United States Department of State, Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States. (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, December 1985), pp. 16 and 17.
19. MacDonald, pp. 47 and 48.
20. Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States, p. 32.

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